



Cost a factor in Canadians' diets

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Though Canadians want to eat better, many say cost is standing in the way of a healthy diet, a new survey finds.

Fifty-five per cent of respondents with low or middle incomes cited cost is a significant obstacle to eating healthy foods.

"Cost is a significant barrier to healthier lifestyles for those making less than \$75,000 a year," said Jack Bensimon, president of Bensimon Byrne, the Toronto-based advertising agency that commissioned the study for its quarterly Consumerology Report, in a release.

Other reasons for a less-than-ideal diet included insufficient willpower, the availability of healthy foods, lack of time, and inconvenience.

At the same time, respondents said they are concerned about the healthiness of their food 85 per cent report a healthy diet is "very important." In fact, food quality beats out topics such as swine flu, poor health care, coal and electricity production and nuclear energy generation in terms of importance.

And survey respondents say that the focus on local foods in grocery stores and in restaurants has been the most positive development in the food business. Ninety-six per cent said they feel very positive about the availability of local products.

"Given the high level of concern about hormones, antibiotics and pesticide use, consumers appear to be feeling that local foods give them similar protection against these things as organic food," said Bensimon.

"Retailers that are moving towards local farming are tapping into a very powerful consumer sentiment."

The survey of 1,627 Canadians was conducted online by the Gandalf Group via a bilingual questionnaire between July 23 and 29. The report yields an error margin of plus or minus 2.43 percentage points 19 times out of 20.

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